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The Navy's Relation to Commerce and Industry

Written Especially for the Engineering College Magazines Associated, by R. R. M. EMMETT, Lieutenant Commander, United States Navy. (All rights reserved by E. C. M. A. except by special permission.)

THE people of the United States are today confronted with their destiny and that destiny lies in great measure on the sea.

The young man of ambition has a different picture presented to him as he goes out into the world, than had his father or his grandfather before him.

For three-quarters of a century the most attractive careers for each rising generation lay at home. Ours was a country of boundless natural resources, of noble opportunities. There was no limit, other than a man's ability, to what could be accomplished at home. Our relations, both political and economic, with the world abroad were extremely simple. There was no economic demand that our people should go down to the sea in ships, and hence we have had no merchant marine worthy of the name. Having no merchant marine to support and secure, our Navy waned to a nominal force, largely composed of old and obsolete ships. It was natural that this should be so. There were no political or economic reasons for maintaining a greater force.

THE CREATION OF OUR NAVY.

As the country discovered and developed its great natural resources and grew rich and prosperous, men of vision here and there, all over the country, foresaw the need of securing our prosperity. A start was made toward the creation of our modern Navy. Men preached the need of developing merchant shipping to transport our products throughout the world.

Progress was necessarily slow. Opportunity to live comfortably ashore abounded, and men were slow to earn their bread at sea.

The Spanish-American war, with its aftermath of new interests and responsibilities, pushed on our naval development. The manifest need of securing the Monroe Doctrine from the selfish assaults of foreign powers continued the expansion of our Navy.

The application of the Monroe Doctrine has successfully safeguarded, for one hundred years, the affairs of this hemisphere from complications that might have threatened the peace of the world. It has permitted the people of all nations in the two Americas to work out their national problems without interference or exploitation from abroad.

STUDY SEAPOWER

Young men launched into the world today face a new perspective. The United States stands as a world power. Its commerce carried in American ships, manned by American citizens, secured by an American Navy, second to none, will traverse the seven seas.

I know nothing more important to commend to the minds of our young men than, first, to study the inevitable influence seapower will exert on the country's future economic development; and then, to translate conditions gained into deeds which will react to the security, prosperity and happiness of our great Republic and its people.

(Signed)

EDWIN DENBY.

The outbreak of the World War plunged us, whether we would or not, into the turmoil of world affairs. We have emerged from that conflict, for the present at least, the richest and most influential nation in the world. Whether we are to maintain our present relatively happy position in the family of nations rests with ourselves. There can be no doubt but that the genius and industry of

our people, the soundness of our political and economic institutions, will enable us to bear prosperity as well as we have supported and borne the strife for prosperity. We must, however, take stock for the future.

THE NEW OUTLOOK.

We have a large and increasing population, a great portion of which has assumed a highly industrial character. Our natural resources have been pretty well discovered, are in the course of development, and can be accurately estimated. If the standard of living of our people is to be preserved; if we are to be fed as American citizens have been fed in the past, we must make better and more scientific use of both our industrial and agricultural resources. Our home markets now, with the passage of the years, approach the saturation point. It is becoming increasingly imperative to produce more goods than we can absorb at home. The building up and development of foreign trade and commerce is becoming an essential to our future economic prosperity.

Mexico and the countries of Central and South America are, figuratively speaking, at our doors. Great opportunities await men of ambition, brains and energy in China, Central Asia, the Near East and in Africa.

THE CRYING NEED.

If our young men go out into the world to compete for the business of the world, they must be served by American ships. If they are served by the ships of other nations, our competitors, they must pay a toll to those foreign ships. If for a time, in spite of that, they are successful, we cannot complain if other nations who control the sea transportation of the world meet our success by taking advantage of such control to prevent our goods from moving about the world with the necessary precision as regards time, amount and place. We must devel-

op our own merchant marine. We can and will develop our own merchant marine.

This history of the world can be analyzed and resolved into a few fundamental principles. History invariably has repeated itself and will again. No nation has ever built up a seaborne trade and commerce unless the ships that served that trade were supported and secured by an adequate naval force.

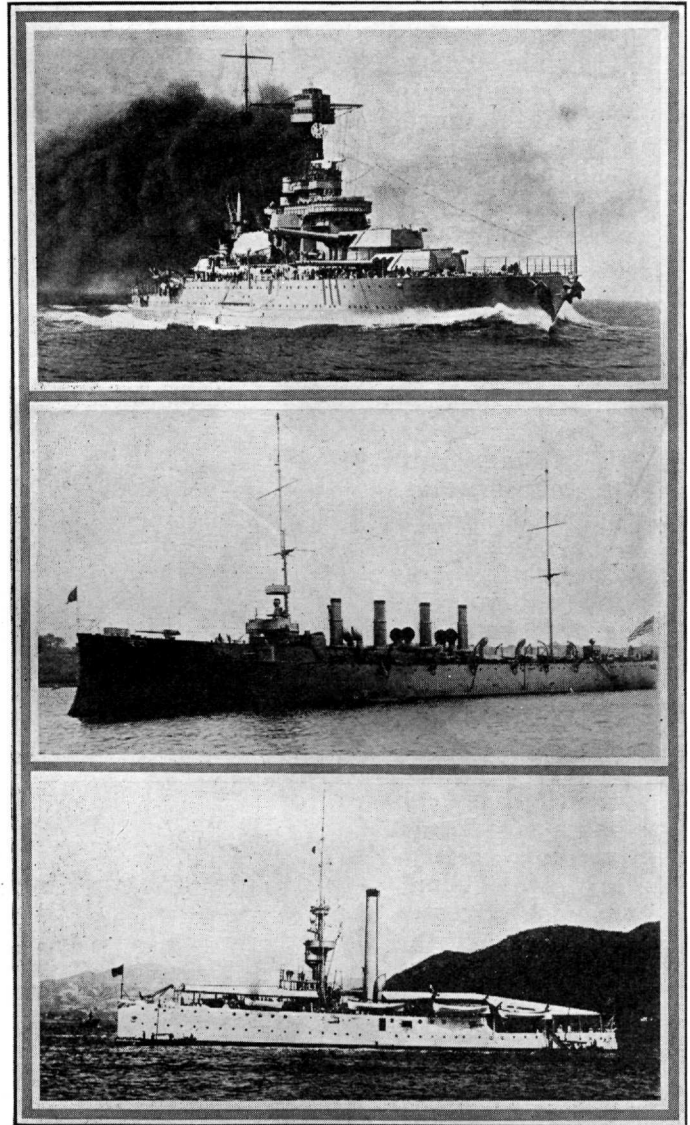
Admiral Mahan in his two great books entitled, "The Influence of Seapower on History" and "The Influence of Seapower on the French Revolution and Empire," traces with matchless clarity the political and commercial development of the Europe we know today. Their contents are being applied by the statesmen of Europe. The history of the Japanese Empire in the past twenty-five years has been substantially guided and influenced by their existence. The principles adduced and analyzed are particularly applicable to our own country, a country that seeks wealth, prosperity and consequent happiness, not by the sword, but rather by honest, industrious labor.

We in the United States have been accustomed to give little thought to our need for a merchant marine, or, if we have considered it at all, only as something seen dimly, in the distance. We have been accustomed to think of our Navy as our strong right arm, as our bulwark in time of war, but as something in time of peace that was necessary, we supposed, but still required a heavy expenditure of the public funds that might be spent elsewhere to more apparent and immediate advantage.

We must revise our ideas; we must renew our perspective. The economic need for seapower is upon us, and by seapower I mean a fleet of American owned, American manned ships, running from great commercial ports to the ends of the world and back, supported and secured by a Navy trained to the razor edge of efficiency and second in power to none other on earth.

Nothing is more important to the future interest of the United States than a thorough

realization by the rising generation of the great influence seapower will inevitably exert on their prosperity and happiness.



Upper—U. S. S. "Tennessee" under way.
Middle—U. S. Cruiser "Birmingham."
Lower—U. S. Gunboat "Wilmington."